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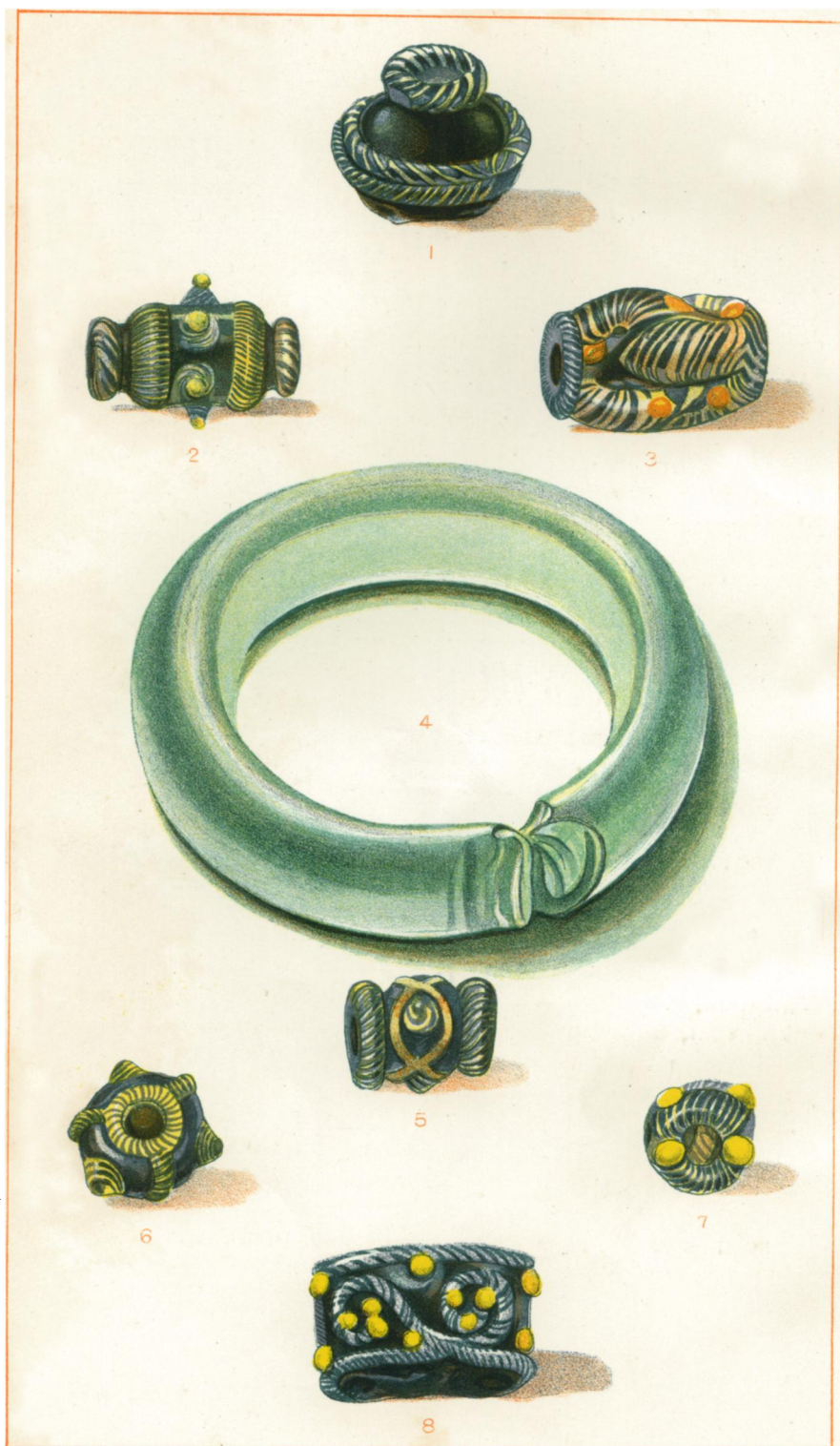
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ORNAMENTS OF GLASS FOUND IN IRELAND.

ON SOME ANCIENT PERSONAL ORNAMENTS OF GLASS FOUND  
IN IRELAND.

BY ROBERT DAY, JUN., ESQ., F. S. A.

ANCIENT glass ornaments, from the most simple and unpretending plain blue bead to the amulet studded with settings of enamel or vitreous paste, and of a form so varied in colour and of so much beauty in outline, that they might well be worn at the present day, are still, from time to time, turned up by the plough, brought to light in the reclaiming of waste outlying ground, and found in the burial mounds of pre-Christian cemeteries, with which our island is so thickly studded. Those so accurately figured in the Plate which faces this page I had the honour of laying before the Association at the January Meeting of this year, and I shall now attempt to describe them.

No. 1 was found at Clough, county of Antrim. From its peculiar, and as far as I can ascertain, unique shape, it might probably have formed the head of a bronze pin. It was turned up by the spade, and in so doing slightly injured by the finder.

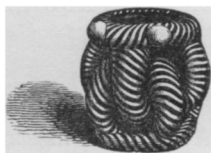
No. 2 is from Tristernagh, a Priory of Canons Regular in the parish of Ballinacarrig, county of Westmeath;<sup>1</sup> the fact of an amulet of pre-Christian origin having been found here can be readily accounted for. It probably came from one of the many Westmeath crannoges, or tumuli, and, as it is no uncommon thing to find an ancient glass bead on a peasant's rosary, so it might in old times have been placed by the finder on his or her "beads," and might have accidentally dropped off in the abbey. The projections on this bead would serve to symbolize the Five Wounds of our Saviour, and would give it the character of a Christian amulet.

No. 3 is a remarkably fine bead, and differs from the two former by having a number of gold-coloured settings of

<sup>1</sup> I purchased this from the late Patrick Fegan, of Killucan, county of Westmeath. He was, though an humble man, a most

zealous collector of, and honest dealer in, the antiquities of which the surrounding district has proved so rich a depository.

vitreous paste enriching its surface. Where any of these have fallen out, there remains a cavity in the glass, showing that the paste or enamel was superimposed on the bead when in a soft state : this refers to all our glass ornaments which have these settings ; the glass was invariably sculped out, and the setting dropped into the cavity. This bead resembles in form one figured in Vol. II., of our "Journal," 2nd Series, p. 8, found at Timahoe, in the Queen's County, and here reproduced.



No. 4 is a wristlet of beautifully pure and transparent pale-green glass. It was found in unreclaimed ground near Ballymena, in July, 1862. Our National Museum in the Royal Irish Academy, Dawson-street, Dublin, contains a portion of a similar bracelet.

No. 5 is from the Lough Revel crannoge, county of Antrim. It was probably worn as a pin or brooch-head. A very similar bead has been published by Dr. Wilson, in the "Pre-historic Annals of Scotland," Vol. I., p. 446, Fig. 84. And another is figured in Dr. Keller's "Lake Dwellings," with a fillet encircling the three projections as in this bead.—*Vide* Plate LXXXI., No. 2.

No. 6 is somewhat similar to No. 5, but that the yellow stripeing which forms a raised rope ornament, instead of being fused in the glass and forming an integral part of it, has been produced by laying the colour on the surface, and this gives it a peculiarly rich appearance. It was found in the same crannoge with No. 5.

No. 7 is an ornament of blue and white glass, set with six large pieces of light yellow vitreous paste. It is believed to be unique, and is here represented on the side in order to show more clearly the small bead which it contains. It is open at three sides, so that the smaller bead can be distinctly seen, and is also pierced through for suspension like any ordinary bead. In this, the most interesting example of early glass that has yet been preserved in this country, the outer ornament is perfectly distinct and separate from the bead which it encloses ; the one, though made over the other, being yet quite separate from it. This

very curious bead was found at Rosharkin in the county of Antrim.

No. 8 was found in the Spring of 1864, near Newtown Limivaddy, county of Derry, by a labourer who turned it up on his spade. It is of oblong form, perfectly plain at the back, and in front is surrounded with a raised blue and white striated beading. It has a similarly formed central scroll ornament, is set with twelve drops of light vitreous paste, and differs from the rest by being pierced with *two* holes, through which a double cord passed.

Blue appears to have been the favourite colour of these ancient beads; but while this is so, our museums and private collections can show others, in pale green, white, yellow, and red, and with spirals and other ornaments of varied colours; while others have a dark ground-work, and are studded with fragments of red, green, yellow, blue, and white enamel, which are set without any attempt at order in the surface. There is one form of glass ornament which, as far as I can ascertain, is found *only* in Ireland. It is shaped somewhat like a dumb-bell (See Fig. 118, p. 173, "Catalogue," R. I. A.), and is made of green vitrified porcelain, or opaque glass; a small transparent glass bead of similar form is figured as part of a chain in Ackerman's "Pagan Saxondom," but it has not the larger ornament.

I have already cited Keller's "Lake Dwellings," and the "Prehistoric Annals of Scotland," for recent notices of glass beads. Reference is also made to them in Engelhardt's "Denmark in the early Iron Age," where the prevailing types are figured, and in Sir W. Wilde's valuable "Catalogue" of the Royal Irish Academy.

It has long been an open question, whether these ornaments were made in this country, or imported as objects of barter. I would be led to suppose from the fact of No. 5 having its counterpart in Scotland, and again in the Lake Dwellings of Marin, in Switzerland, which has been called by Dr. Keller, "*the* (Lake) Settlement of the Iron Age," and from some of the beads in my collection resembling both in form, size, and colour, beads figured by Engelhardt, that these beads were imported, and that they may be classed with the antiquities which belong to the late bronze

and early iron period. When found by the peasantry, they are still regarded as possessing a talismanic power, and are sometimes called "gloine-an-druidh," or the "magician's glass." And in Scotland they are termed "adder stones," and "snake stones."

I hope this subject will be continued by my friend Mr. Benn, whose private collection and long experience so far exceed mine, and who contributed an interesting paper on Ancient Glass Beads to the "Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire." See their "Proceedings," Vol. VIII., January, 1855.

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